

Appl. No. : 09/659,999
Filed : September 12, 2000

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action mailed April 29, 2003, Applicant has amended the application as above. No new matter is added by the amendments as discussed below. Applicant respectfully requests the entry of the amendment and reconsideration of the application in view of the amendments and the remarks set forth below.

Discussion of Claim Amendments

Claims 1 and 3 have been amended. Upon the entry of the amendments, Claims 1-6 and 8 are pending in this application. The amendments to the claims are supported, for example, by the specification at page 9, lines 5-8, and Figures 4A, 4B. Thus, no new matter is added by the amendments. Applicant respectfully requests the entry of the amendments.

Discussion of Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1-2 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Urani (U.S. Patent No. 4,391,485) in view of Bixler, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,118,306). The Examiner has rejected Claims 3-6 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Urani in view of Bixler and Call (U.S. Patent No. 4,758,184).

Rationale of 35 U.S.C. § 103

In order to provide a *prima facie* showing of obviousness under 35 U.S.C. § 103, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. *See, e.g., In re Royka*, 490 F. 2d 981, 180 U.S.P.Q. 580 (CCPA 1974); MPEP 2143.03. In the case of the presently claimed invention, the prior art does not teach or suggest all of the claim limitations as discussed below.

Neither Urani nor Bixler Discloses or Teaches that At Least a Large Majority of Each of the Side Terminals is Enclosed Within Each of the Side Housings

Each of independent Claims 1 and 3 recites, among other things, a first side housing in which a first side *terminal attached* to an end of a first side wire is *pre-assembled*, such that *at least a large majority of the connection end of* said first side wire is *enclosed* within said first side housing. Each independent Claim 1, 3 also recites, among other things, a second side housing in which a second side *terminal attached* to an end of a first side wire is *pre-assembled*, such that *at*

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least a large majority of the connection end of said second side wire is enclosed within said second side housing. According to one embodiment of the claimed invention, the structure of enclosing *at least a large majority of the connection end of each side wire* within each side housing provides a benefit that protective bags, which were required in the prior art to prevent short circuits or other problems by covering output side terminals, can be eliminated and thus the fuse box assembly can be performed efficiently as discussed in the specification page 4, lines 2-4. Neither of the Urani and Bixler references discloses or teaches the above claim limitations as discussed below.

Urani does not show that the first and second side wires are preassembled in the first and second side housings such that a large majority of the connection and of each of the first and second side wires is enclosed within the first and second housings, respectively. The Examiner has acknowledged as such in this Office Action.

Bixler does not disclose or suggest the above claim limitations, either. Bixler shows in Figure 4 that a small portion of the conductors (40) is positioned within the channels (42). In addition, in the Bixler patent the conductor portions positioned in the channels (42) are not enclosed within the guide members (22a, 22b). Instead, the conductor portions are exposed to the outside from the guide members (22a, 22b) as clearly shown in Figure 4. That is, the Bixler reference does not disclose or teach that *at least a large majority of the connection end of each of said first and second side wires is enclosed* within said first and second side housings, respectively.

In view of the above, neither Urani nor Bixler discloses or teaches that the first and second side terminals are *pre-assembled* in the first and second side housings, respectively such that *at least a large majority of the connection end of each of said first and second side wires is enclosed* within each of said first and second side housings recited in Claims 1 and 3.

No Motivation or Suggestion to Combine Urani and Bixler
to Create the Claimed Invention Exists

In order to provide a *prima facie* showing of obviousness under 35 U.S.C. § 103, the Patent and Trademark Office has the burden to provide a motivation, teaching, or suggestion to create the claimed invention. *See, e.g., In re Fine*, 5 U.S.P.Q.2d 1597 (Fed. Cir. 1988). In the case of the presently claimed invention, no such motivation or suggestion exists as discussed below.

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Each of independent Claims 1 and 3 recites, among other things, that each of the first and second side *terminals attached* to an end of each of the first and second side wires is *preassembled in the first and second side housings*, respectively. Urani shows in Figure 5B a terminal structure (38) which is attached to the wire (18). However, the Bixler reference does not show any terminal structure which is attached to the conductors (40) and preassembled in the guide members (22a, 22b) as discussed below.

Referring to Figure 6 and column 8, lines 53-59, Bixler discloses a plurality of terminals having pin portions (70) and insulation displacement portions (72). However, the plurality of terminals are separate from and located outside the guide members (22a, 22b). The insulation displacement portions (72) are configured to be connected to the ends of the connectors (40) via a plurality of apertures (60, 62) in the outside of the guide members (22a, 22b). Thus, in the Bixler reference the insulation displacement portions (72) cannot be preassembled in the guide members (22a, 22b). However, in the claimed invention the side terminals are preassembled in the side housings. In view of the above, Applicant respectfully submits that there is no motivation or suggestion to combine the Urani and Bixler references in connection with the missing elements of the Urani reference, the side terminals which are attached to the side wires and preassembled in the housings.

Call does Not Disclose or Teach the Protective Cover Recited in Claim 3

In addition to the above claim limitations, independent Claim 3 recites a protective cover *attached to said first side housing and second side housing*. Call does not disclose or teach this claim limitation as discussed below. Referring to Figures 1 and 4, and column 2, lines 24-26, Call discloses that a removable cover (20) is attached to a fuse part (42), but not attached to a base part (40). That is, the cover (20) is only attached to one of the housing portions (40, 42). In contrast, in the claimed invention, the protective cover is attached to both of said first side housing and second side housing. Thus, Call does not disclose or teach the protective cover attached to the first side housing and second side housing recited in Claim 3.

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Summary

In view of the above discussion, the cited references cannot establish a *prima facie* showing of obviousness. Therefore, independent Claims 1 and 3 are patentable over the Urani, Bixler, and Call references. Claims 2, 4-6 and 8 depend from their base Claims 1 and 3, and further define additional technical features of the present invention. In view of the patentability of their base claims, and in further view of the additional technical features, the dependent claims are patentable over the cited references. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION


Applicant has endeavored to address all of the Examiner's concerns as expressed in the outstanding Office Action. Accordingly, amendments to the claims, the reasons therefor and arguments in support of the patentability of the pending claims are presented above. Any claim amendments which are not specifically discussed in the above remarks are not made for patentability purposes, and Applicant submits that the claims would satisfy the statutory requirements for patentability without the entry of such amendments. Rather, these amendments have only been made to increase claim readability, to improve grammar, and to reduce the time and effort required of those in the art to clearly understand the scope of the claim language.

In light of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections is respectfully requested. If the Examiner finds any remaining impediment to the prompt allowance of these claims that could be clarified with a telephone conference, the Examiner is respectfully requested to initiate the same with the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

KNOBBE, MARTENS, OLSON & BEAR, LLP

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By: 
Thomas R. Arno
Registration No. 40,490
Attorney of Record
Customer No. 20,995
(619) 235-8550